CASTLEFORD,

21st March, 1898.

To THE CASTLEFORD URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Gentlemen,—I have again the pleasure of presenting to you my Annual Report on the Sanitary Condition of your district for the year ending December 31st, 1897, with the accompanying Tables of Statistics A.B.C.

**Death Rate.** The number of Deaths registered during the year has been 283, viz: 147 Males, and 136 Females The Death Rate being 15·72 per 1,000 living. The Death Rate for the previous year being 13·05. Of the total number of Deaths 15 or 5·3 per cent. were uncertified.

**Birth Rate.** The number of Births registered during the same period was 667, viz: 334 Males, and 333 Females, the Birth Rate being 37 per 1,000 living, the Birth Rate for the previous year being 31·1. Of the total number of Births 20 or 3 per cent were illegitimate.

I must here mention, that in calculating the Birth and Death Rates, I have only estimated the population at the same as the previous year; for although there has been a certain amount of new property erected, there has been a number of houses in the district which have been unoccupied during the greater portion of the year.

The number of Deaths which took place in children under 5 years of age was 167, being 59 per cent. of the total number of Deaths and at the rate of 9·28 per 1,000 living.

Of these 167 Deaths, 122 took place in Infants under 1 year, being 43 per cent. of the whole, and at the rate of 6·8 per 1,000 living.

The number of Deaths which took place in persons between 5 and 25 years of age, was 27; between 25 and 60 years of age, 53; and over 60 years of age, 36, while of these 15 were over 70, and 3 of these were over 80 years.

The number of Deaths which have taken place from the seven Zymotic diseases is 50, viz: 10 from Measles, 4 from Scarlatina, 2 from Whooping Cough, 1 from Diphtheria, 2 from Fever, and 31 from Diarrhœa, 42 of these taking place in children under 5 years of age, and 8 in persons over 5. These Deaths are 17·67 per cent. of the total number of deaths and give a death rate of 2·8 per 1,000 living, the Zymotic death rate for the previous year being 1.

There has been no case of Small Pox reported in your district during the year.

**Measles.** In my last Annual Report I called attention to an outbreak of Measles in the last quarter of 1896. this, however, did not assume alarming proportions, but this disease became more prevalent on the re-opening of the schools and increased to such an extent that in March I made a special report to you on the subject and also advised the Temple Street and Welbeck Street Schools to be closed for six weeks. After having been opened for three weeks, this disease again became prevalent in the Eleven Acres district, and the Temple Street School was again recommended to be closed for a further period of six weeks. As this disease is not one of those requiring notification, much valuable time is lost during the early stages of the epidemic, when Isolation and Disinfection and individual instruction would be of most value. On becoming aware of the outbreak I obtained a list of houses where children were absent from school, from the School Attendance Officer, and then the Sanitary Inspector visited all such houses giving the necessary instructions to the parents as regards Isolation, Disinfection &c. Many parents are still of opinion that this is a simple ailment, and all children must have it, but they cannot be too forcibly impressed of its seriousness, both as regards its danger to life, and also its after effect upon the health of the child. There is also the interference with education, as well as the loss to the School Board, which a serious epidemic of this disease entails, to be taken into consideration in deciding whether this disease should or should not require notification.

**Scarlet Fever.** There have been cases of Scarlet Fever notified to me in each month, 41 cases in all, against 76 cases in the previous year. These cases have given rise to 4 Deaths. At no period did it assume an epidemic form and there is no doubt that as regards this disease notification has been the means of limiting its extent and compulsory removal to Hospital in cases where Isolation is impossible would tend still further to check its spreading.

Whooping Cough has given rise to 2 Deaths during the year, and I would again recommend your Council to include this among the notifiable diseases, it being a highly infectious and transmissible disease, and one in which, in my opinion, notification would assist in checking an epidemic at its outset.

There have been 4 cases of Diphtheria notified to me one of which terminated fatally.

There have been 4 cases of Enteric Fever notified to me during the year, 2 of which terminated fatally. In none of these cases was I able to attribute it to any Insanitary condition about the several premises or anything wrong with the water supply.

There have been 31 Deaths due to Diarrhœa registered during the year, 29 being in children under 5 years of age; 2 in persons over 5. Thirty out of the 31 cases took place between July 25th and September 6th, and all but two in Infants under 2 years of age. This in my opinion tends to prove that the cause of Infant mortality from Diarrhœa is to be found more in bad feeding and the dirty surroundings of many children than in any external condition absolutely under the control of the Sanitary Authority.

In addition to the above mentioned cases of Infectious disease there have also been notified to me 9 cases of Erysipelas, making in all 58 cases during the year. This I may say is a very satisfactory condition when compared with the previous year, when 101 cases were notified to me.

Diseases of the respiratory organs have caused 72 Deaths including 18 from Phthisis.

The Water Supply has been satisfactory during the past year.

As regards the Sanitary Work done, in addition to statistics found on Table C. The Manholes have been regularly cleaned and flushed, 20 Ashpits and Privies have been reconstructed. The Ashpits and Privies have been emptied on an average 4½ times during the year.

The Lodging-Houses, Slaughterhouses, and Dairies and Cowsheds have been regularly inspected and kept in a satisfactory condition.

I am pleased to see that your Council are making some advance as regards Street Improvements. Beancroft Street, Roundhill Road, and Long Acre have had good Causeways and Channells laid down; Queen Street has been made into a good street as regards its requirements, and Carlton Street for part of its length has been very much improved. There is still a good deal to be done in the way of Street Improvements both public and private and I trust that before long we shall have the whole district with good Causeways and passable Roadways.

I would again suggest, for the consideration of the Council, the advisability of erecting a Public Slaughterhouse, as tending to improve the Sanitation of the district, and for this purpose Whitwood, Glasshoughton, and that portion of Allerton Bywater situate between the bridges should be induced to join and so benefit the whole of the district.

Frequent complaints having been made about the stench arising from the Manholes in different parts of the town, I would suggest, that either they should be closed and proper ventilating shafts erected or the Manholes themselves be kept constantly supplied with Disinfectants.

Signed, E. WALKER KEMP,

Medical Officer of Health.